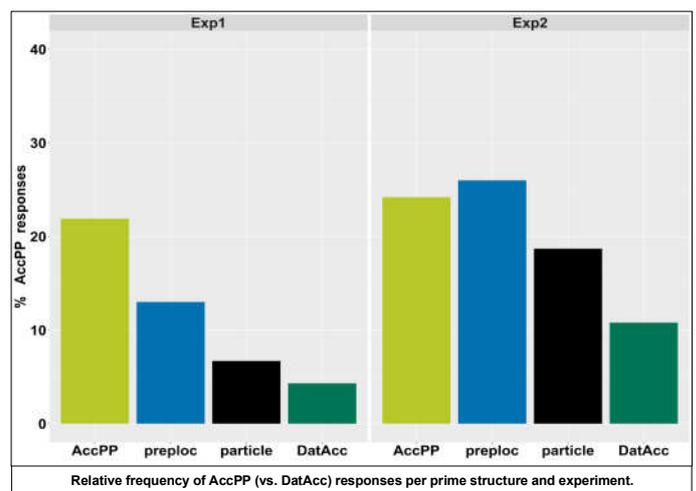


Be specific! On the availability of participants encoded by particles

Introduction

- The location in which a theme ends up in an event of caused motion is typically encoded by a PP in a German sentence (as in English, e.g., *The artist sticks the photo to the wall.*).
- In a particle verb variant of this sentence the location argument slot of the verb is saturated by the particle but the location is semantically underspecified (Stiebels, 1996; e.g., *The artist sticks the photo on.*).
- We investigated whether the difference in semantic specificity of the location argument is reflected in the mental event representation (Exp1), and if so, whether givenness in the linguistic context can lead to adaption (Exp2).
- Methodology: sentence generation in the structural priming paradigm (Bock, 1986)
 - Primeable elements are mentally represented.
- Assumption: Similar (primed) event representations lead to similar grammatical encoding (Pappert & Pechmann, 2014).

Results



• $N_{Exp1} = 588$ (11.7% AccPP), $N_{Exp2} = 648$ (19.8% AccPP) from 20 items and 48 subjects per experiment

• Binomial GLMMs on AccPP responses (vs. DatAcc):
 $AccPP \sim prime.structure + target.order + (1 | Subject) + (1 + target.order | item)$; interaction did not improve fit

Exp1 with prime sentence only:

- Main effects of prime structure and target noun order
- Planned comparisons of prime structure:
Particle = DatAcc ($p = .17$)
Preploc \neq DatAcc ($p < .01$)
AccPP \neq DatAcc ($p < .001$)

Exp2 with context question and prime:

- Main effects of prime structure and target noun order
- Planned comparisons of prime structure:
Particle \neq DatAcc ($p < .05$)
Preploc \neq DatAcc ($p < .001$)
AccPP \neq DatAcc ($p < .001$)
- The general increase in AccPP responses over conditions from Exp1 to Exp2 is most probably due to a cumulative effect (Jaeger & Snider, 2013).

Materials and Procedure

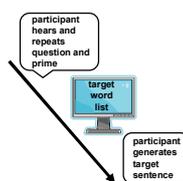
preploc: *Die Grafikerin klebt das Foto an die Dose.*
 'The graphic artist sticks the photo to the can.'

particle: *Die Grafikerin klebt das Foto an.*
 'The graphic artist sticks the photo on.'

AccPP: *Die Grafikerin liefert das Foto an die Journalistin.*

DatAcc: *Die Grafikerin liefert der Journalistin das Foto.*
 'The graphic artist sends the photo to the journalist / the journalist the photo.'

Exp2 context question: Dative alternation target: *übergeben* ('to hand')
Was ist mit der Dose / der Journalistin? *Oberst* ('colonel')
 'What about the can / the journalist?' *Orden* ('medal')
Soldat ('soldier')



Discussion and Conclusion

- Exp1: The linguistic informativity of particles vs. PPs encoding locations is indeed not only reduced at the form level but also at the conceptual level.
- Exp2: Contextual availability of a specific location referent may lead to inference and elaboration processes that allow for updating the mental event representation with an additional participant. The resulting representation is similar to that leading to the overt realization of a location in a prepositional form. Thus, grammatical encoding is primed.
- The findings help to evaluate accounts of language processing, particularly those focusing on the construction of situation models, and grammatical encoding of participant roles in sentence production. Moreover, they implicate that future experiments and corpus studies on structural priming should take contextual constraints into account.

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